

WMAC NS June Teleconference (Draft)

July 22, 2020

By Phone

Attendees: **Dave Tavares** (Parks Canada), **Tyler Kuhn** (Yukon Government), **Craig Machtans** (Canada Alternate), **Kaitlin Wilson** (WMAC NS staff), **Allison Thompson** (WMAC NS staff), **Lindsay Staples** (WMAC NS Chair), **Michelle Gruben** (IGC Alternate), **Mike Sutor** (Technical Support, Yukon Government), **Kayla Arey** (Contractor for WMAC NS)

Meeting Started at 1:10pm.

1. Agenda

Motion 2020-07-03 to accept the agenda. Moved by Michelle Gruben, seconded by Tyler Kuhn.

2. Minutes

June 24th

- No comments from those present

Motion 2020-07-04 to adopt the June 24th minutes, subject to any final revisions by Billy Archie and Danny C. Gordon. Moved by Tyler Kuhn, seconded by Craig Machtans.

Staff will follow up with Billy and Danny.

July 7th

- Deferred to next meeting.

3. Action Items

For action item 2020-06-04, staff will aim to provide the options paper on better communication between IGC and the WMAC NS reps by the September 2020 IGC meeting.

4. Chair, Staff, and Member Reports

JS Update (Lindsay)

- The office manager, Cheryl, resigned
- The JS is recruiting a finance manager to increase the organizational capacity to track finances
- There have been some issues with slow payments for WMAC NS members, staff and Lindsay will be working with the JS on this issue. Michelle noted that the JS has gotten much better over the last year on this issue.
- The JS 2019-20 financial statements have been shared with WMAC North Slope.
 - The statements indicate the vast scale of the organization and how complex the finances are

- The JS has a significant amount of surplus funds and will be accepting proposals for use of the surplus funds.

Grizzly bear DLP letter from IGC (Lindsay)

- IGC recently sent a letter to WMAC NWT and the NWT Deputy Minister of Environment requesting that defense of life and property (DLP) kills of grizzly bears in the ISR are not counted as part of the quota for that species.
- The reasoning is that when faced with a potential DLP situation, Inuvialuit should not have to worry about losing a subsistence tag.
- The letter was not sent to WMAC NS and YG, which is confusing because the letter is looking at an ISR-wide decision.
- This situation appears to have a lot to do with dump bears in Aklavik, which was a big issue in summer 2019.
- To work through this, it would be helpful to see the number of grizzly bear DLPs by community.
- Grizzly bear tags do not roll over from year to year
- For the YNS, it's harder and harder for people to get out on the land (price of gas), so the quota is underfilled more and more recently. E.g. this year, there were five unused tags.
- This issue is a part of a bigger issue in the ISR and management of bear attractants, especially community dumps.

Update on the muskox research program (Mike)

- Mike and colleagues applied for POLAR funding for the muskox research program and were approved. Currently revising the research plan, it's close to final.
- There was an approved muskox research program for summer 2020 (IFA funded project), and some components are being revised. For this September, proposing to top up the collars on the muskox then aim for a population survey next year.
- Recruitment compared to the previous year has yet to be estimated (more photo census later this summer).

Discussion of companion document review to date (All)

- Lindsay reminded the Council of the purpose of the Companion Document.
- Dave provided some comment from Parks and DFO:
 - Dolly Varden and Broad Whitefish chapters are somewhat unique in terms of FJMC and DFO involvement in species management
 - Because the chapters are so detailed, there is a lot of nuance and fodder for comment
 - DFO noted that there should be more consultation with FJMC, the West Side Working Group, GRRB, etc. before these chapters are finalized
 - Review by DFO was informal and not an endorsement
 - DFO expressed uncertain about the purpose of this document
- Consider expanding and clarify purpose and character of the document up front
- Important to remember that this is a WMAC NS product (these are the views of the Council) and the plan and companion are not substitutes for other existing reports, agreements, plans, etc. + acknowledge other contributions to work in the region and in the review of doc
- Consider emphasizing external review on the marine-related chapters and internal review for the other chapters
- Focus scope on supporting conservation requirements

- Add further detail for higher value species like caribou and keep others, like Whale and Seal and Dall sheep, high level
- Share DFO comments with Joan
- Some sections may get cut from the draft chapter in order to refine the focus
- Perfect document vs the one we are able to complete - we need to get this done
- Climate change chapter might warrant more detail because it's the one piece where we are stretching beyond the direct IFA mandate.

Norway polar bear NDF update (Allison)

Allison has prepared a briefing note on the issue (added to the meeting package today) and provided a summary of the briefing note for Council to consider in reading later. There are also a couple of new research papers in the polar bear update folder.

The Norway NDF report sits within a larger international forum that excludes Inuit knowledge from considerations and decision-making. This is likely an early move towards recommending uplisting polar bears at the next CITES meeting in 2022.

Canada plans to update the Canada trade report and NDF in response (no additional response planned). This must be done before 2022.

The ad hoc Inuit Wildlife Working Group is strategizing putting forward a response to the NDF on behalf of Inuit groups, under the umbrella of the ICC. Chanda (IGC) will be the point of contact for the ISR and we can funnel our comments through her. While the letter may not sway the behaviour of Norway, it's important to be on the record.

Tyler will provide information on the NDF for BC grizzly bears, as a comparison case study.

Allison will funnel comments through Chanda on behalf of the Council.

Craig noted that the ADM has decided to not respond before the Canada NDF, so as not to presuppose an outcome. There has been no discussion of the pros and cons of an earlier response. Timeline for NDF is late fall/winter.

ANWR Leasing Update (Craig)

Nothing has happened since the Final Environmental Impact Statement. A Record of Decision could come out any day.

Climate change report (Kait)

Round River produced a draft Climate Change Gap Assessment in the early spring. Comments from WMAC NS were relayed back to RRCS. We recently received a revised draft back from RRCS. Members who need to confirm they are good with how their comments have been incorporated will do so. After the document is finalized it will be shared on the website and could be shared with researchers.

5. Presentation

Kayla Arey - see briefing note in the meeting folder

Kayla has been creating a set of graphic stories about Inuvialuit and the YNS. The stories are standalone, but will also be compiled into a collection once all stories are complete. Kayla has written all of the stories. An Inuvialuit artist has been hired to do the art to accompany the stories - she has done a great job so far. The titles of each comic will be in Inuvialuktun (Aklavik dialect). Hopefully down the line we can translate the entire text of the stories to Inuvialuktun - right now there is not a lot of translation services available when it comes to more complex sentences.

Kayla has also been doing a series of interviews - "science chats" - where researchers talk about their work on the YNS. The interviews start with teaching the researcher an Inuvialuktun word or phrase.

Kayla is also working on a webpage for the WMAC NS website on YNS insects.

Kayla is also working on a briefing note on how insect research can be incorporated into the updated WMAC NS research plan for the YNS. Inuvialuit knowledge of insects can be leveraged as part of this work. E.g. mosquitoes drive a lot of wildlife movement (e.g. of caribou) and Inuvialuit observations can help build out knowledge around this interesting ecological dynamic.

The Council finds the artwork really compelling and the work overall shows an innovative way of communicating scientific information.

Are there many Inuvialuktun words for different insects? There are general words for the families (bee, butterfly, dragonfly) and in some cases where the species difference is obvious there may be a specific word.

For the science chats - any thoughts on Inuvialuit researchers or research support people involved? E.g. Payden Lennie who leads research projects for Parks Canada on the YNS.

Kayla plans on interviewing Inuvialuit practitioners and is open to feedback from members/staff on questions that they might like to have asked to Inuvialuit representatives.

6. Upcoming Meetings

Next Council meeting (Aug 27, 2020):

- IGC options paper, support for IGC members
- DLP discussion
- Admin discussion (legal status of council, personnel and harassment policies)
- WCMP/IPCA
- Ecosite guide publication

Craig wanted an update on the WCMP review process. WMAC NS is looking into the possibility of YG launching a public consultation process without IRC's approval, given how long they are taking. Wyss has indicated that there are more funders interested in contributing to the long-term fund, up to a couple more million dollars. IRC has provided no indication of when they will be done reviewing the draft WCMP or where they are at with the overall process.

YG is finalizing an Ecosite guide for the YNS. Can present at an upcoming meeting.

Motion 2020-07-05 to adjourn. Moved by Tyler Kuhn, seconded by Michelle Gruben.

Meeting adjourned at 4:02pm.